

# GUIDES TO SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OF NON- FARM YOUTH IN WAR- TIME AGRICULTURE



*For Use in  
Victory Farm Volunteer Program*

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# Guides to Successful Employment of Non-Farm Youth in Wartime Agriculture

## *Young Workers Can Help on Farms.*

American youth, who are eager to have a part in the war effort, are needed to help the farmer get in the 1943 crops. The American farmer is short of labor as never before and yet must meet unprecedented food-production goals. Youth can take part in the tremendous job that must be done on the farms to achieve victory.

The experience of 1942 showed that young people from cities, even when they are inexperienced in farm work, can help the farmer, if they are well supervised on the job. In many places last year boys and girls of high-school age took a big part in getting in crops, like berries, fruit, and vegetables. They can and will do much more in 1943.

School youth can be counted on especially for work during vacations. Before boys and girls are taken out of school to work it should be certain that there is no one else to do the job. Education is important in wartime as in peacetime, and the future manpower needs of the Nation would be endangered if boys and girls were deprived of schooling for any considerable period. When school youth must be called upon to help in the emergency during the school term every effort should be made to adjust the school program so that lost school work can be made up.

## *The Need and Plans for Young Workers Will Vary.*

The need for these young workers will vary in different parts of the country. The types of crops vary, and so do the rate at which labor has been drained into industry and the amount of adult labor available for farm work in different areas. Therefore plans to recruit city boys and girls for work on farms should not be made until the official agencies have found that there

will not be enough older workers available and that there is need for the particular type of project under consideration.

In order to meet different needs provision will be made by various public and private agencies, working together in local communities, for three types of programs: day-hauls from urban centers, individual placements on farms, and work camps. In most cases the young workers will live at home and work by the day, either on nearby farms or on farms at a greater distance to which they are taken daily. In other cases it will be necessary for the young workers to live in the rural area where they are to work. If they are to do general farm work throughout the season, they will probably live in farm homes. If large numbers of young workers are required from outside the area for harvesting work, they will probably live in work camps.



### *Guides Are Essential to Success in Employing Young Workers.*

Most of the boys and girls who will be drawn upon to take the place of adult and experienced workers are both immature and inexperienced in farm work. Many of them have lived all their lives in cities and towns. Special care is therefore needed in the use of these young people if they are to be able to do the job. If the use of young people as emergency farm workers is to be successful, it must not only give the farmers efficient labor but at the same time give the young people an experience that will hold their interest and contribute to their educational growth and healthy development.

These guides are offered as the essentials for programs that will prove satisfying to the farmers, to the young people, and to their parents.

### *Careful Selection of Workers Is Better Than Haphazard Recruiting.*

Limitation of recruitment to boys and girls old enough and sufficiently well-developed physically to work efficiently and without undue strain will help to give satisfactory results to both farmers and young people. Consideration should be given to whether age, sex, and individual growth and development are suitable for the particular job to be done.

Experience has shown that the best results may be obtained in employing non-farm youth, if the following requirements are made the policy for selecting recruits for agricultural work:

Minimum age of 14 years,<sup>1</sup> when the young workers live at home and go to work by the day;

16 years when the young workers live away from their families in families in farm homes or work camps,

Except that when the work is part of a camp program conducted by a recognized youth-serving agency that provides close supervision, a minimum age of 14 years is suitable.

Age proved by documentary evidence of date of birth or school record.

Written consent of parents.

Physical fitness for the job. Physical examinations should be given wherever possible. Where this is not possible, school health records should be consulted.

Although resources for physical examinations may be limited, every effort should be made to utilize whatever resources there are or can be made available in the community, such as private physicians, public-health departments, clinics and health agencies in urban centers, and school health facilities.

Care should be taken in recruitment to observe any State or Federal legal standards affecting employment in agriculture.

### *Non-Farm Youth Need Preparation for Work.*

Young people who have had little or no previous experience in doing farm work need special preparation and training

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, if the producer ships goods in interstate commerce, a minimum age of 16 applies to minors employed in agriculture while legally required to attend school; under this act also, a minimum of 16 is established for work in canneries or other food-processing plants.



for the work and continuing supervision on the job to enable them to meet the farmer's labor needs satisfactorily.

The young workers must be helped to understand the purpose of the program and the importance of the contribution they can make to the war effort. Preparation that builds good attitudes, a sense of responsibility and respect for the job will help to prevent carelessness, waste of time, accidents, and destruction of crops and property.

The young workers need advance information on what to expect in the work they are going to do. Misleading publicity that advertises the job as a vacation seriously interferes with the development of good work attitudes and should be avoided. The recruits should be told what the farmer will expect of them and what will be the probable conditions of work. If they are to live away from home, they should also be told about their probable living arrangements. They should be shown how to do the work efficiently and without injury to themselves or other workers.

Such preparation for employment should be a part of the program of the schools from which recruits are drawn, and it should reach out-of-school youth recruited for employment as well as those in school. Activities to prepare youth for effective participation in the farm program can also be conducted by youth-serving agencies and by youth organizations.

### *Leadership Is Key to Successful Employment of Groups of Young Workers.*

Farmers who used inexperienced youth in 1942 agreed that these boys and girls must be given close supervision. When inexperienced young workers are employed in numbers, as they usually are for harvesting work, they should be placed in groups, each of which is in charge of a leader. The work groups should be organized, wherever possible, around existing groups, such as clubs and classes in schools, churches, and public and private leisure-time agencies. Such a group can effectively participate as a unit in training activities. Groups of this kind under their regular leaders will work with greater productivity and better morale than newly organized squads of recruits under new leadership.

Regardless of the character of the group, each group should be under the direction of a leader.

These group leaders help to maintain good morale and interest among the workers and to promote good work habits and efficient and safe methods of work. They work along with the group and carry forward any preemployment training that has been given. They take care of individual problems of members of the group. In addition, the group leader may attend to arrangements regarding transportation, wage rates and payments, rest periods, meals, and other working conditions.

Such leaders serve under the direction of the farmers and sometimes are employed by the farmers to serve as their field foremen. They give the special leadership needed by immature and inexperienced workers to supplement the supervision given by the farmer. Leaders can be recruited from among teachers and older students in the schools, especially from those in agricultural courses, and from youth-serving and youth organizations as well as various other community groups. The leaders need to be given special preparation for meeting their responsibilities and should work under the direction of a central supervisor with responsibility for the entire project to employ non-farm youth.

### *Good Conditions of Work Help To Make Good Workers.*

To achieve good results in the employment of young workers special care must be taken to insure working conditions suited to their immaturity. Agencies and persons responsible for recruitment and placement of inexperienced boys and girls in farm work are urged to observe the following standards:

#### *HOURS*

Not more than 8 hours of work a day. (Not more than 6 hours is desirable for children of 14 and 15.) Some variations may have to be allowed under emergency conditions for older youth who live in farm homes and are employed as general farm hands.

During the first few days of work shorter hours are desirable to permit inexperienced workers to become accustomed to the work.

Not more than 6 days of work a week, except that young persons employed as general farm hands may do morning and evening chores on the seventh day.

Lunch and rest periods.





## WAGES

Same wages—whether piece or hourly rates—as those paid to older beginning workers for the same type and amount of work.

Payment of wages in cash and prompt payment at times agreed upon.

## SANITARY FACILITIES

Sanitary toilet and washing facilities available to the young workers while at work.

## DRINKING WATER

Adequate supply of drinking water from approved sources.



## SAFETY AND INSURANCE MEASURES

Protection against accidents on the job through—

- Farm equipment in good working order;

- Training in safe methods of work;

- Assignment of work involving the handling of animals, tractors, machinery, and dangerous tools and implements only to older youth trained in their safe use;

- Supervision on the job by persons trained in safe work methods;

- Provision of first aid and medical care in case of injury while at work;

- Wherever practicable the field foremen or group leaders should have had the American Red Cross First Aid and Home and Farm Accident Prevention courses.

- Payment of expenses in case of injury while at work. Coverage by workmen's compensation insurance should be encouraged wherever possible.

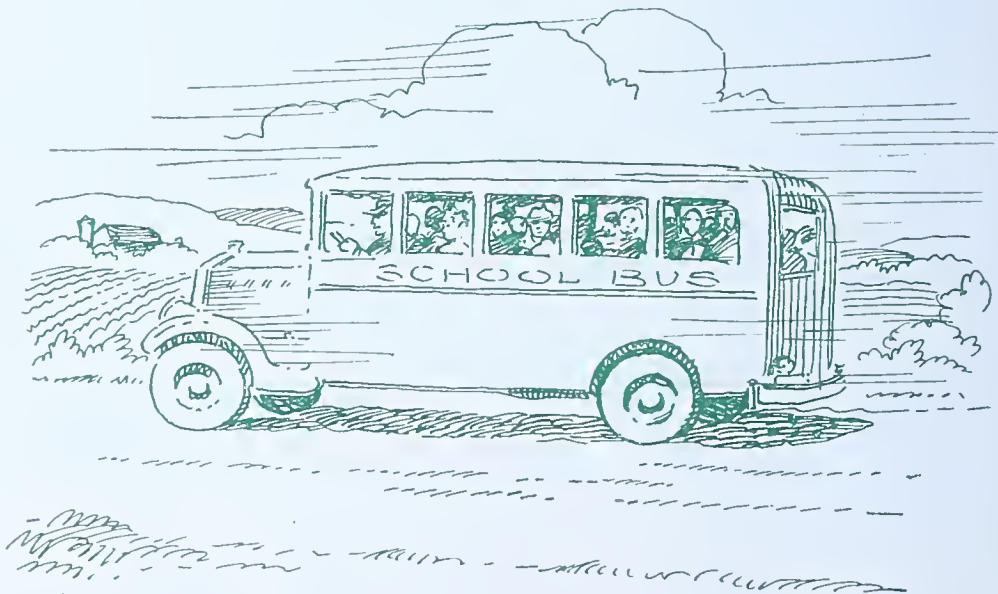
**DANGEROUS TRANSPORTATION—NO SEATS, NO TAIL GATE**



**SAFE TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation to and from work only in vehicles that are in safe mechanical condition and maintained in full compliance with State laws and regulations. Busses and automobiles should be used in preference to trucks. Where trucks must be used, seats should be provided and sides and rear should be enclosed. The use of steps in getting in and out of trucks will also reduce accidents.

**SAFE TRANSPORTATION**



Vehicles driven by responsible licensed adults who follow safe driving practices.

Avoidance of overcrowding in vehicles.

Coverage by adequate liability insurance.

Training of young workers in safe conduct while being transported to and from work and supervision during transit to prevent accidents.

Careful observance of these conditions, essential to the protection and well-being of the young workers, will go far toward gaining widespread community support and continued cooperation of young people and their parents, thus helping to assure the success of the program.

### *Good Living Conditions and Recreation for Young Workers Away From Home Reduce Labor Turnover.*

When boys and girls are employed at work requiring them to live away from home, satisfactory living conditions and good times outside of working hours become important to the success of the program. The lack of them results in poor morale, inefficient work, and excessive turnover.

*Work camps.*—Living accommodations in work camps should conform to good camping standards of health, safety, sanitation, staff, program, insurance, and administration. Desirable standards, as developed by organizations with special experience in camping, are set forth in the American Camping Association's publication, *Marks of Good Camping*.<sup>2</sup> This publication will be found helpful by anyone responsible for the operation of work camps.

The camp site and facilities should have the approval of the appropriate public-health agency. In order to protect health the camps should be careful to comply fully with State and local laws and regulations regarding water and milk supply, sewage disposal, and other sanitary conditions. Arrangements must be made to have first aid, medical care, and hospitalization readily available in case of illness or injury among the campers.

A balanced diet adequate for young people doing heavy outdoor work is essential. Home-demonstration agents, health-department nutritionists, and home-economics teachers can be helpful in planning meals. A leaflet on dietary standards,

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<sup>2</sup> This publication may be obtained from the Association Press, 347 Madison Avenue, New York City, for 75 cents.

the Yardstick of Good Nutrition, published by the Committee on Food and Nutrition of the National Research Council, should be useful.<sup>3</sup>

Each camp should have a qualified director in charge, with a sufficient number of assistants to give adequate supervision. A good arrangement is for some of the camp staff to work in the fields and also act as group leaders there, as well as to give supervision in the living quarters. The supervisory staff should have had leadership experience with young people in group activities.

For the young people to benefit from the group living experience, the staff will need to know how to conduct the camp on an informal, cooperative, and democratic basis. One of the key responsibilities of the staff is to arrange for recreational and social activities for the young people outside of working hours and during days when weather or other conditions make it impossible to work. Teachers, especially those familiar with progressive educational methods and with vocational training in agriculture, and staff members from organized camps and leisure-time agencies, are a major resource for the type of leadership needed.

*The individual farm home.*—Agencies placing young workers in farm homes or in quarters provided by the farmer have a responsibility for insuring the young people good living and sanitary conditions. The farm family has responsibilities similar to those of the work-camp director for enabling the boy or girl who is placed with it to make friends and participate in the church and social activities of the community. Qualified field staff will be needed to assist in dealing with problems that may arise and making the placement satisfactory both to the farmer and to the young person. Consultation with persons who have had experience in dealing with young people and in making arrangements for young persons to live outside their own homes, wherever such services are available, will be found helpful. The responsibilities of the field staff will require

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<sup>3</sup> This publication may be obtained from the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services, Washington, D. C. Market lists for moderate-cost and liberal meals, available from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., suggest kinds and quantities of food for a week for boys and girls of different ages.



a point of view that is concerned both with the individual boy or girl and with meeting food-production goals. They also will call for skill in dealing cooperatively with all parties involved.

### *Good Results Depend Upon Careful Community Planning.*

The employment of inexperienced young people as emergency farm workers involves a variety of problems. Many kinds of services will have to be provided either in the city or town from which the young people are recruited or in the farm area in which they work. In most local communities a variety of agencies and groups are interested in helping the farmer in the Food for Victory program and are ready to offer their services. If all needs are to be met and all community services that can be of help in using non-farm youth on farms are to be made available there must be joint planning by all interested groups in the local community. Without careful planning unfortunate conditions will arise that will cause dissatisfaction to the farmers, to the young people, and to their parents. Planning to provide preparation for employment, supervision, and suitable working and living conditions is essential in order to avoid inefficient work, preventable accidents, and excessive labor turnover.

To do this planning there needs to be a broadly representative committee in each local community where a need to employ boys and girls has been determined. This committee should be identified with whatever existing local committee is taking responsibility for the emergency mobilization of all sources and types of farm labor. When no such committee exists which is adequately representative, the existing committee should be broadened or a new committee should be established. The committee may be county-wide or may extend over several counties to cover a crop area or to include both recruitment and farm areas.

A broadly representative committee will obtain widespread public support for the program. In addition to the major public agencies with responsibilities for the operation of pro-



grams, this local committee should include representation from farmers, parents, youth-serving agencies, and health, welfare, church, labor, and other community agencies. To avoid cumbersomeness in operation, a small committee composed of the chief operating agencies with some representation from other groups included in the general committee, may be set up to carry out planning and coordinating functions in accordance with the desires of the larger committee.

The local committee would provide a basis for coordination of the activities of the various agencies and serve in an advisory capacity to the constituent operating agencies. It should help to see that plans include adequate provision for all aspects of the program. The committee would also concern itself with the setting up and maintenance of standards, in conformity with those set by State and National agencies, to cover all aspects of programs to employ boys and girls as emergency farm workers.

*Relationship of local committees to State committee.*—Local committees should work in close relationship with a corresponding State or regional committee. In all States that need to recruit boys and girls for emergency farm work the State committee on farm-labor supply should set up a subcommittee concerned with the employment of youth. This committee would—

- Assist in coordinating the activities of various State departments and agencies;

- Develop standards for the health and welfare of the young workers in harmony with those of national and regional agencies to cover all aspects of local programs;

- Develop plans to insure maintenance of standards;

- Stimulate the development of resources for training young workers and for the recruitment, training, and supervision of supervisory staff and group leaders;

- Give service to local communities in setting up and conducting programs.

The plan for the State committee should be integrated with over-all plans as to labor supply.

The State committee, like the local committee, should be representative of all the State departments, agencies, and groups concerned with the employment of boys and girls in agriculture.

## *Varied Agencies Can Contribute to Successful Employment of Youth.*

The participation of all agencies, private as well as governmental, that can contribute to the strengthening of programs for the employment of young workers on farms is needed to make these programs a success.

Because of differences in local communities, there may be some variations as to agencies carrying specific responsibilities. The following list, however, suggests some of the responsibilities of the public and private agencies and the organizations that should be called upon to give service in these programs:

### *Agricultural agencies:*

- Determination of need.

- Assistance to farmers in making effective use of immature and inexperienced workers.

- Recruitment and placement.

- Determination of prevailing rate of wages in area.

- Supervision of farmer-worker relationship.

- Arrangements for transportation and housing facilities.

- Assistance in maintenance of standards for working and living conditions.

### *Defense councils:*

- Assistance in coordinating plans and activities of all agencies concerned.

- Recruitment and training of volunteers for supervision and youth leadership.

- Assistance in recruitment of workers.

- Interpretation of the program to the community.

### *Schools:*

- Registration and selection of youth.

- Orientation of youth toward understanding—

  - (a) The importance of the program to the war effort.

  - (b) Rural community life.

  - (c) The conditions under which they will work.

- Preemployment and on-the-job training in the tasks and skills required on the local farms.

- Assistance in giving physical examinations when other provision is not made.

- Assistance in providing supervision of youth as part of a total plan.

- Interpretation of the program to parents.

Health and welfare agencies:

- Formulation of standards to protect the health of young workers.
- Inspection of health and sanitary conditions.
- Provision of facilities for physical examination.
- Provision of medical care in case of illness or injury.
- Assistance in determining the adequacy of living facilities for young workers living away from home.
- Assistance in providing supervision for young workers living away from home and in dealing with situations that require adjustment.
- Cooperation with agricultural officials in preparing farmers for any adaptations in working conditions needed in the interest of the health and welfare of the young workers.
- Assistance in seeing that all available community resources are utilized to safeguard the welfare of the young workers.

Youth-serving and youth organizations and churches:

- Provision of training for older youth and adults who will assist in leadership of young workers placed in groups from harvest camps or on a day-haul basis.
- Provision of counseling and supervision for youth in their work experience and off-duty time.
- Assistance in recruiting existing groups of young people to serve as work units.
- Supplying of camp-director experience to insure full utilization of camping skills and standards in group-living situations.
- Provision of camp facilities and equipment.
- Representation of the interests of the young workers.

Parents and citizen groups:

- Representation of the interests of parents and the community in safeguarding the well-being of the young worker.

Careful, coordinated planning by all agencies concerned to insure efficient service to the farmer and to safeguard the interests of the boys and girls will achieve successful results.

Older boys and girls are being asked to give generously of their spirit and energy in our common effort to produce and harvest the Nation's food. Let us not use their labor wastefully. Let us see that their contribution is made in ways consistent with their health and welfare and with the fullest use and development of their capacities.

Katharine F. Lenroot,  
*Chief, Children's Bureau.*